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RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 3222  
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SUBJECT: DEMARCHE DELIVERED ON GOJ INVITATION TO ZIMBABWE  
TO ATTEND TICAD IV

REF: STATE 169468

Classified By: CDA Joseph R. Donovan. Reasons 1.4 (b/d)

¶1. (C) EMIN delivered demarche points (ref) to MOFA Director General for African Affairs and the Prime Minister's Personal Representative for Africa Shuichiro Megata Jan. 9. Charge also discussed USG concerns over the invitation the GOJ issued to Mugabe to participate in the Fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV) with the MOFA Ambassador heading GOJ preparations for the Lake Toya G8 Summit Fukada. EMIN raised the issue as well with MOFA DG for International Assistance Bessho and DG for Economic Affairs (and G8 Sous Sherpa) Otabe. Fukada, Bessho, and Otabe all stated Megata was responsible for the issue and needed to be the one to receive the official demarche, although Bessho saw the difficulties Mugabe's presence would pose and Otabe confided he had warned Megata last summer before Japan sent its initial invitations that inviting Mugabe would cause problems.

¶2. (C) Megata told emboffs in response to the demarche points that the GOJ had invited all Sub-Saharan heads of state (except Somalia, with which Japan has no diplomatic relations) in July via notes verbale from its embassies. He said PM Fukuda also had sent African leaders a letter in December inviting them to the May 29 - 30 conference. Foreign Minister Koumura has visited some African capitals to reinforce the invitations and former PM Mori, who will chair the conference, is scheduled to visit others to do so.

¶3. (C) While recognizing what Mugabe has done to Zimbabwe, Megata said Japan believes engagement is the best way to persuade him to pursue "more reasonable" governance. He said TICAD is designed to be an open, inclusive forum, including donors, emerging market country donors (e.g., China), international organizations, and civil society representatives. TICAD is also, he continued, an opportunity to discuss Africa's overall development, including the importance of good governance and democratization. The conference, he stated, is not meant to address country-specific problems. (Please see septel for discussion of overall Japanese thinking/planning for TICAD IV.) Japan shares U.S. concerns about the situation in Zimbabwe, but prefers to address them bilaterally. Japan is watching the efforts of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and hopes it will be able to help resolve Zimbabwe resolve its problems, Megata stated.

14. (C) EMIN rejoined noting the points made by Bessho and others about the importance of good governance in development and Japanese government concerns that China's assistance programs in Africa are undercutting the DAC and other international consensuses on development aid. He also questioned how it would look to those Africans working to develop democratic, sound free market systems with respect for law and human rights if Mugabe were participating in the conference. Senior Coordinator for TICAD IV Seiji Okada, noting the targeted sanctions the U.S., EU, and others have in place, stated Japan normally does not take actions against individuals. North Korea, he continued, sends a representative to the Asia Regional Forum, but Japan still participates in the conference. "Engagement is the best education" for errant regimes, he said. Okada added that while the media played up PM Brown's boycott of the December EU-Africa conference, Mugabe's presence did not devalue that event. The GOJ, Okada opined, does not think his presence "will do serious damage" to TICAD either.

15. (C) Comment. Megata and Okada were defensive and very reluctant to consider discouraging Mugabe's personal participation. As a subsequent conversation with MOFA DG for Economic Affairs Otabe revealed, there have been discussions in MOFA about the wisdom of the invitation to Mugabe. We will continue to raise the matter of Mugabe's invitation/probable participation with high-level Japanese officials. End comment.  
DONOVAN